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**‘Stoß in [die] Modellschweiz ein’: Simulating Switzerland as Alpine Heimat in Stefan Kaegi’s *Mnemopark* (2005)**

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In *Mnemopark* (Theater Basel, 2005), Swiss director Stefan Kaegi presents a miniaturized vision of Switzerland on the stage in the form of a model railway. Throughout this postdramatic theatre production, Kaegi draws on the wider dramaturgical techniques of Kaegi’s work with the award-winning German-Swiss collective Rimini Protokoll. During the production five ‘Experts of the Everyday’ interact with the model railway that dominates the stage, recalling their memories and experiences of reality. These are layered onto the model itself, which comes to represent a simulated vision of Switzerland as Heimat on the stage. In applying Jean Baudrillard’s theory of simulation to *Mnemopark*, this article addresses how the production juxtaposes multiple traces of reality on the stage. This highlights how the model and the extra-theatrical reality that it supposedly represents are in fact disconnected from each other. In doing so, I highlight how *Mnemopark* interrogates contemporary understandings of Switzerland as Heimat in a way that posits a future reconceptualization of the nation that is inclusive and potentially utopian.

Key words: Baudrillard, Heimat, postdramatic theatre, Rimini Protokoll, Simulation, Stefan Kaegi, Switzerland.

Swiss-born director Stefan Kaegi represents one third of the theatrical collective Rimini Protokoll, who have produced ground-breaking and award-winning theatre since the early 2000s across Germany, Europe and the globe. Though their productions differ markedly in form, each draws on

postdramatic, multi-media documentary practices that engage with the supposed reality of the postmodern age. At the same time, all have at their heart the desire to further ‘die Weiterentwicklung der Mittel des Theaters, um ungewöhnliche Sichtweisen auf unsere Wirklichkeit zu ermöglichen’.<sup>1</sup> Kaegi’s *Mnemopark* (Theater Basel, 2005) is no exception.<sup>2</sup> Throughout, the means of the theatre are employed to elucidate new perspectives on contemporary Switzerland and its alpine identity. Indeed, the production presents alternative understandings of contemporary Switzerland as Heimat via the 37m-long model railway that dominates the stage, purportedly represents a miniaturized Switzerland and forms the focus of the theatrical event. In this article I employ French critical thinker Jean Baudrillard’s theory of simulation to posit *Mnemopark*’s model railway as a physical condensation of the multiple, malleable notions that underpin Swiss conceptualizations of Heimat. Most notably, these include the role of the Alps as the simultaneously geographical and mythological foundation of Heimat and, the negotiation of memory within Heimat discourse. In doing so, I expose the construction and negotiation of Switzerland as Heimat as explored in *Mnemopark*. As will be shown, however, the positing of Switzerland as a potentially utopian Heimat is not a present reality but rather a future potentiality. As such, I demonstrate how *Mnemopark* assumes a position amongst wider trends in Swiss Heimat discourse, both historical and contemporary.

The theatre of Rimini Protokoll is firmly embedded in the contemporary postdramatic theatrical tradition. Outlined by Hans-Thies Lehmann in his influential *Postdramatisches Theater* (1999), postdramatic theatre is a form of theatrical practice, ‘das sich veranlaßt sieht, jenseits des Dramas zu operieren, in einer Zeit »nach« der Geltung des Paradigmas Drama im Theater’.<sup>3</sup> In his text, Lehmann classifies traditional dramatic theatre as representing: ‘den Versuch [...] durch Theater einen sozialen Zusammenhalt zu formen oder zu bekräftigen, eine Gemeinschaft, die Publikum und Bühne emotional

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<sup>1</sup> Rimini Protokoll, *Rimini Protokoll* <<http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/de/about.html>> [accessed 23 March 2016].

<sup>2</sup> References to the production are based on the following recording: Rimini Protokoll, *Mnemopark*. Stefan Kaegi (*Deutscher Sprache*) <<https://vimeo.com/48075052>> [accessed 20 January 2014]. Further references to the production will be provided in the text.

<sup>3</sup> Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatisches Theater*, (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Autoren, 1999 (5. Auflage 2011)), p. 30.

und mental zusammenschließt.’<sup>4</sup> For Lehmann this precipitates what he terms a ‘*fiktiven Kosmos*,’ in which the stage supposedly represents the extra-theatrical world.<sup>5</sup> In the latter twentieth century, however, a gulf has emerged between subject and representation. For Karen Jürs-Munby, this has resulted from the tension between Aristotelian drama and the epic nature of modern social themes: as a result of historical circumstances, dramatic theatre is unable to represent the contemporary world.<sup>6</sup> Throughout his text Lehmann outlines and identifies contemporary theatrical practices that seek to move beyond the creation of this ‘*fiktiven Kosmos*’ on the stage by reorganising the theatrical event such that the dramatic text no longer forms the central reference point of a production. Rather, Lehmann postulates a theatre characterized by a non-hierarchical structure defined by a parataxis of all (theatrical) elements.<sup>7</sup>

In *Mnemopark*, though a pre-ordered sequence of events is presented on the stage, this neither follows a dramatic script nor is it representative of the real world in a traditional, dramatic sense. As such, the theatrical event does not form such a fictive cosmos. Rather, Kaegi’s production presents a slice of the supposedly real world on the stage. In doing so, he draws on the wider dramaturgical practices of Rimini Protokoll, who eschew professional actors and performers in favour of an engagement with so-called ‘experts of the everyday’. Rimini Protokoll are at pains, however, to stress that these individuals are not amateurs playing at theatre. Indeed, according to the collective:

Laien [k]ommen in unseren Stücken nicht vor. Aus seinem Leben zu erzählen, ist kein Privileg von Absolventen irgendeiner Ausbildung. Wenn es um dein Leben geht, bist du selbst der Profi.<sup>8</sup>

Within Rimini Protokoll’s dramaturgy, the experts of the everyday are therefore not amateurs in the traditional sense, for they are not on the stage to test their theatrical abilities. Rather, they are in fact ‘experts’ in some aspect of their own everyday reality, and it is this reality that is brought ostensibly to the stage in the collective’s productions. By engaging with these individuals and their expertise,

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 21 (emphasis original).

<sup>6</sup> Karen Jürs-Munby, ‘Introduction,’ in Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. by Karen Jürs-Munby, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 1-15 (p. 3).

<sup>7</sup> Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatisches Theater*, p. 146f.

<sup>8</sup> Rimini Protokoll, *ABCD*, (Berlin: Theater der Zeit, 2012), p. 69.

Rimini Protokoll develop productions that are based on supposedly tangible and extra-theatrical realities. These are then presented on the stage in such a way that they feel unaltered and authentic. In spite of this, however, the dramaturgical processes employed by the collective mean that an ordering of reality does occur. In a Rimini Protokoll production, one can never be certain that what one is watching is wholly unscripted or true to life outside of the theatre.

In *Mnemopark*, the experts are members of the *Modellbauverein Basel*, model railway enthusiasts who have created the model that dominates the stage: Max Kurrus, Hermann Löhle, Heidi Louise Ludewig and René Mühlethaler. Together with a fifth expert, Rahel Hubacher, who acts as a narrator, the four enthusiasts interact with and explain the model that they have created in the course of the production. Throughout *Mnemopark*, the five experts construct a narrative within and around the model that opens up precisely those ‘ungewöhnliche Sichtweisen auf unsere Wirklichkeit’ which Rimini Protokoll seek to expose through their theatrical practice. In *Mnemopark* these novel ways of seeing centre on the construction and negotiation of Switzerland as Heimat within wider cultural and memorial discourse. Indeed, throughout the production this process is played out in miniature in and through the model railway present on the stage. In what follows I first establish *Mnemopark* within a broader conceptual tradition of Switzerland as Heimat. In the subsequent sections I analyse how Baudrillard’s theory of simulation can be mapped onto the production to elucidate how this process represents an intrinsic aspect of both model-making and Heimat discourse itself.

### **Negotiating Switzerland as alpine Heimat**

The development of Heimat as a concept can be traced concurrent to the emergence of industrial Modernity in the German-speaking lands from the late eighteenth century onwards. Indeed, Heimat emerges as a direct response to the impact that Modernity has had on how individuals conceive emotionally of their relationship to geographical space. This emotional connection posits the relationship between individual and place as psychological. Heimat moves therefore out of the concrete and into the abstract, being at once both physical and mental. This combination of geographical and psychological elements is supported by Peter Blickle, for whom Heimat is: ‘both a spiritualized province (a mental state turned inside out) and a provincial spirituality (a spatially

perceived small world turned outside in'.<sup>9</sup> This connection between psychology and the historical emergence of the concept is supported by Gabriele Eichmanns, who states that Heimat functions as 'a secularized religion in a seemingly secularized world' by providing a 'refuge' for the modern subject.<sup>10</sup> Friederike Eigler similarly highlights this aspect of Heimat by recognizing the concept as 'a manifestation of the loss of metaphysical rootedness'.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the psychological quest for place represented by Heimat is an ongoing, performative process: as Axel Goodbody states, Heimat functions as a 'socio-cultural construction, defined and constantly redefined in a discourse involving political and cultural actors'.<sup>12</sup>

Connected as it is to real and imagined spaces, Heimat is also intrinsically connected to time through the workings of memory. A result of both the sense of loss precipitated by modernity, and imbued with a sense of innocence tied to a childhood experience of space, Heimat is always already marked by a temporal distance to the present. For Eigler and Jens Kugele, that 'loss and nostalgia' surround Heimat in this way 'mean[s] that it is frequently interrogated via memory and trauma'.<sup>13</sup> Boa and Palfreyman note similarly that the passage of time manifests itself as a nostalgic yearning for the past as a result of the imagined Heimat of childhood.<sup>14</sup> In the discussion of *Mnemopark* that follows, both the role of memory in the construction of the model railway by the experts and the implications this has for the formation of Switzerland as Heimat more generally will be shown. The experts not only build landscapes based on the real and imagined spaces of their past, but during the production each experiences a so-called 'Flashback' which places them into the simulated, memorial space of the model and allows them to negotiate multiple understandings of Heimat and belonging.

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<sup>9</sup> Peter Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland*, (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004), p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Gabriele Eichmanns, 'Introduction: *Heimat* in the Age of Globalization', in *Heimat Goes Mobile: Hybrid Forms of Home in Literature and Film*, ed. by Gabriele Eichmanns and Yvonne Franke, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Pub., 2013), pp. 1-13, (p. 4f).

<sup>11</sup> Friederike Eigler, *Heimat, Space, Narrative. Toward a Transnational Approach to Flight and Expulsion*, (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2014), p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Axel Goodbody, 'Heimat's Environmental Turn', (paper presented at the 2011 ASLE conference, Bloomington, Indiana, 21 June 2011), p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Friederike Eigler and Jens Kugele, 'Introduction', in *Heimat at the Intersection of Memory and Space*, ed. by Friederike Eigler and Jens Kugele (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), pp. 1-12 (p. 3).

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat. A German Dream. Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990*, (Oxford: OUP, 2000), p. 24f.

Though Heimat is imbued with innocence through its connection to childhood and nostalgia, the highly politicized nature of the concept becomes apparent when one considers both the places to which Heimat refers and against which it is measured. Heimat is, by its very nature, predicated on the existence of a non-Heimat, the *Fremde*, and the traditions and inhabitants of the *Fremde*, the *Ausländer*. Historically, the difference between self and Other that lies at the core of Heimat has been exploited for political gain. Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman have demonstrated how Heimat, conceived at the end of the nineteenth century as a localized concept, shifted after the First World War to become ‘ever more identified with nationhood’ concurrent to the rise of National Socialism.<sup>15</sup> The implications that this has had in Switzerland are elucidated below. Recent scholarly engagement with Heimat in response to globalization and (post)modernity has led to a fruitful reconceptualization of the concept and its loaded historicity. Linda Shortt, for example, posits an alternative understanding of belonging in contemporary literature that moves beyond Heimat and challenges its attachments to space and cultural homogeneity.<sup>16</sup> In this way, her work mirrors that of Eigler, who takes issue with applications of Heimat often resulting in one-sided considerations of the concept ‘as a shorthand for regressive, narrow, or nostalgic notions of place’.<sup>17</sup>

It is clear that Heimat performs multiple roles depending on the historical, geographical and political contexts in which it is intoned. In Switzerland the concept takes on even more nuances in relation to the linguistic, cultural and confessional differences that characterize the Swiss Confederation and which have to be negotiated in the formation of an inclusive national identity. In what follows I explore this further in relation to the Alps as a geographical foundation of Switzerland as Heimat before tracing these patterns in my analysis of *Mnemopark*. Whilst points of juncture in the development of the concept across the German speaking world are obvious, in Switzerland these moments have often precipitated alternative understandings of Heimat to those of its neighbours. Heimat is, of course, contested within German culture. However, the peculiar historical circumstances

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<sup>15</sup> Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat. A German Dream*, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Linda Shortt, *German Narratives of Belonging: Writing Generation and Place in the Twenty-First Century*, (Oxford: Legenda, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Friederike Eigler, *Heimat, Space, Narrative*, p. 22.

surrounding the foundation of the modern Swiss Confederation in 1848 and the pluralistic make-up of the Swiss cantons have resulted in differing conceptualizations of Heimat existing simultaneously within Swiss culture.

As Jürgen Barkhoff and Valerie Heffernan describe, this internal plurality meant that Switzerland was unable to call upon ‘quasi-natürliche Zugehörigkeitsmerkmale’ such as a common language or culture to establish a singular notion of identity.<sup>18</sup> In lieu of such markers, the Swiss had to rely on alternative narrative interpretations of history to establish the nation as a ‘staatstragende Erinnerungsgemeinschaft’.<sup>19</sup> Jeroen Dewulf traces the emergence of parallel notions of Heimat back to the Helvetic Republic (1798-1803). During this period both those who supported and those who opposed Napoleonic occupation drew on the founding medieval mythos of the Swiss state to ground their claims of belonging to the national community.<sup>20</sup>

Such intoning of the ‘unifying’ role of Heimat is paralleled in the early twentieth century period of *geistige Landesverteidigung*. Falling between the late 1920s and 1962 this period saw Switzerland seek to establish a common cultural framework by which both neutrality and internal cohesion could be maintained in the face of fascism and, subsequently, communism. As a political and cultural movement, *geistige Landesverteidigung* called for the cultural inculcation of values and images that were seen as quintessentially Swiss. For Beatrice Sandberg, these values included the central position of nature and the agricultural world and, the elevation of ideals such as freedom as ‘Erbstücken der Vergangenheit und eines guten föderalistischen Geistes’.<sup>21</sup> Sandberg quotes a speech made by the CVP politician Philipp Etter in May 1936, which intones Switzerland’s pluralistic composition, and calls for *geistige Landesverteidigung* to embody ‘das Bestreben, die kulturelle

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<sup>18</sup> Jürgen Barkhoff and Valerie Heffernan, ‘Einleitung “Mythos Schweiz”’. Zu Konstruktion und Dekonstruktion des Schweizerischen in der Literatur’, in *Schweiz Schreiben. Zu Konstruktion der Mythos Schweiz in der Gegenwartsliteratur*, ed. by Jürgen Barkhoff and Valerie Heffernan, (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 7-27 (p. 10).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Jeroen Dewulf, ‘Reimagining Heimat from a Hybrid Perspective: Hugo Loetscher’s Concept of a plural Heimat’, in *Heimat Goes Mobile: Hybrid Forms of Home in Literature and Film*, ed. by Gabriele Eichmanns and Yvonne Franke, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Pub., 2013), pp. 14-36 (p. 17).

<sup>21</sup> Beatrice Sandberg, ‘Geistige Landesverteidigung (1933-1945)’, in *Schweizer Literaturgeschichte*, ed. by Peter Rusterholz and Andreas Solbach, (Stuttgart, Weimar: Verlag J. B. Metzler, 2007), pp. 210-239 (p. 215).



*Vielfalt* als Kennzeichen der Schweiz als einer *Willensnation*'.<sup>22</sup> In doing so, Switzerland sought to self-consciously position itself as ideologically distinct from National Socialist notions of the German people [*Volk*] existing as a linguistic singularity.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, in emphasizing 'Geist' the movement aimed to replace the National Socialist emphasis on 'biologischen Rassentheorie' that formed a constituent part of their 'Blut und Boden' mythos.<sup>24</sup> That *geistige Landesverteidigung* fostered a pluralistic understanding of Swiss belonging in this period means that, for Dewulf, Heimat was able to function as a '[non]contaminated' concept after 1945.<sup>25</sup> That is not to say, however, that it remained uncontested. Indeed, intellectuals identified within the movement a resurrection of conservatism in the face of a perceived communist threat during the Cold War.<sup>26</sup> In doing so, these intellectuals maintained the pre-1945 tendency of those on the left to try and promote a progressive variant of *geistige Landesverteidigung* that, for Dewulf, 'attempted to structure Switzerland's cultural policy on the basis of democratic, humanitarian and social welfare values'.<sup>27</sup>

As a means of maintaining internal cohesion, *geistige Landesverteidigung* sought to bolster a collective Swiss identity based on a series of common cultural values in the face of an internal plurality that threatened to undermine the whole. These values are nonetheless predicated on a mythology of Swiss origin and a mythologized landscape in which the Alps play a prominent role. Echoing Barkhoff and Heffernan's comment on the need for Switzerland to establish alternative narratives to create a common sense of identity, Peter Utz notes that historically the mountains have been cast as a unifying force in lieu of a common national enemy.<sup>28</sup> Historically, the linguistic connections between Switzerland and its neighbours has resulted in the absence of a singular national Other against which it could position itself. As Utz states: 'Dort [in den Alpen] lokalisiert man die mythische Schweizerfreiheit, doch dort drohen auch jene Naturgefahren, welche die Schweiz erst

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 211 (emphasis original).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidf.

<sup>25</sup> Jeroen Dewulf, p. 20.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

<sup>28</sup> Peter Utz, 'Der Kitt der Katastrophen', in *Schweiz Schreiben. Zu Konstruktion der Mythos Schweiz in der Gegenwartsliteratur*, ed. by Jürgen Barkhoff and Valerie Heffernan, (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 65-76 (p. 66).

recht zur nationalen Solidargemeinschaft zusammenschweißen'.<sup>29</sup> The history of the Alps being assigned such a role is explored by Uwe Hentschel in his seminal *Mythos Schweiz*, in which he interrogates the positing of Switzerland as an alpine arcadia by German travellers between 1700 and 1850.<sup>30</sup> As Hentschel demonstrates: 'Die Schweiz erschien in fast allen Werken als ein idyllisches Refugium inmitten einer erhabenen Landschaft. Es war ein ideelles Konstrukt, das sich aus Bildern, Symbolen und Begriffen zusammensetzte.'<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, Hentschel identifies four key features of the mythic Switzerland that can still be recognized in notions of Switzerland as Heimat today: 'das Naturerhabene, das Patriarchalische, die ländliche Idylle und die bürgerliche Freiheit.'<sup>32</sup> Crucially, Hentschel demonstrates that such notions have been debated from the very start as the singularity of the posited Arcadian myth was undermined by the realities encountered by travellers and writers in Switzerland.<sup>33</sup> From the very beginning, the geographical, mythical foundations upon which notions of Switzerland have been based have been questioned and challenged by a conceptual gulf between reality and its representation. One can identify here a link between the positing of Switzerland in historical literature and Baudrillard's notion of simulation, in which an image of reality is constructed from signs that supposedly represent reality but in fact bear no connection to reality at all. This will be examined in more detail in relationship to *Mnemopark* below.

That the Alps perform an assigned role is developed by Elias Canetti, who saw the Alps functioning as a so-called crowd symbol, an image 'around which a popular feeling of national belonging could be generated and sustained,' as Oliver Zimmer has demonstrated.<sup>34</sup> Zimmer goes on to illustrate that such positing took on a political dimension over time in that the Alps were painted in differing ways to manipulate what is perceived as the defining characteristic of Swiss national consciousness.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, he demonstrates that the Alps have functioned variously as a 'unifying force,

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Uwe Hentschel, *Mythos Schweiz: Zum deutschen literarischen Philhvetismus zwischen 1700 und 1850* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2002).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 365.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 146f.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Oliver Zimmer, 'In Search of National Identity: Alpine Landscape and the Reconstruction of the Swiss Nation', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 40:4 (Oct 1998), pp. 637-665, (p. 637).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 645.

a defensive castle and a purifying force'.<sup>36</sup> David Scott attributes a similar role to the Alps, and posits the alpine landscape as one of a number of icons around which Swiss national identity was conceived up until the latter half of the twentieth century.<sup>37</sup> Scott identifies a subsequent shift in conceptualizations resulting from the often tense relationships between the multiple communities which form the Swiss state.<sup>38</sup> Here one can identify both the unease borne of a pluralistic national composition, and the fragility of the role assigned to the landscape that is seen to underpin such notions of unity. The fragility of such postulations has also been highlighted by Andrew Liston, who argues that the 'Allgegenwärtigkeit' of the Alps in Swiss culture and literature has resulted in this role itself becoming almost mythical.<sup>39</sup> Liston posits instead that the Alps are best seen as a 'Brennpunkt der Mythologie der Schweiz' in which the imprecise and mythological formation of identity come together via storytelling.<sup>40</sup>

As is clear, neither the notion of Switzerland as Heimat nor the mythological foundations on which this is based are stable. Rather, both are marked by a constant (re)negotiation of the narratives and spaces on which they are based in response to changing local and global circumstances. As Barkhoff and Heffernan demonstrate, this process has intensified from the early 1990s onwards as a result of political and cultural crises that precipitated a period of uncertainty, disorientation and soul-searching amongst the Swiss.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, as a result of these paradigm-shifting circumstances, 'sahen sich viele Eidgenossen plötzlich mit einem Bild ihrer Heimat konfrontiert, das in die herrschenden Geschichtsvorstellungen nie Eingang gefunden hatte'.<sup>42</sup> It is possible, therefore, to see Kaegi's *Mnemopark* as part of a wider Swiss cultural trend that seeks to challenge not only the discourses and memory cultures by which Switzerland is constructed as Heimat, but also the representation of those

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> David Scott, *Poetics of the Poster: The Rhetoric of Image-Text* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), p. 94.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 102.

<sup>39</sup> Andrew Liston, 'Bergzauber: Franz Bönis mythische Bergwelten,' in *Schweiz Schreiben. Zu Konstruktion der Mythos Schweiz in der Gegenwartsliteratur*, ed. by Jürgen Barkhoff and Valerie Heffernan, (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 105-114 (p. 105).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 104f.

<sup>41</sup> Jürgen Barkhoff and Valerie Heffernan, 'Einleitung', p. 13ff.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

real geographical spaces upon which these notions are grounded. In what follows I examine this in more detail through an analysis of Kaegi's 2005 production. At the same time, a consideration of Baudrillard's notion of simulation will be applied to *Mnemopark* to reveal both the construction and negotiation of Switzerland as Heimat in and through the media, and the destabilization of the relationship between representation and reality that the production highlights. In doing so, I expose the inclusive and utopian potentialities of Switzerland as Heimat as postulated at the end of *Mnemopark*.

### **Representing Switzerland in HO**

As the train moves through the landscape, the view is quintessentially Swiss: bucolic, rolling green hills dotted with cattle, fruit trees and farmhouses, families enjoying a stroll or sharing a picnic, and iron bridges spanning deep, shadowy gorges. In time, however, incongruous elements emerge: a sole policeman in riot gear and a couple in the throes of passion. In turn these images, too, give way to the bizarre: a tunnel leads underneath a tank of goldfish, only to emerge beside a mountain of cured meat featuring a crashing river of milk. This is, after all, no ordinary landscape, and nor is it a normal train: one has entered into Stefan Kaegi's *Mnemopark*, a reproduction of Switzerland in miniature on the stage. The model landscape that dominates the stage is formed of fifty-six discrete units assembled by four members of the *Modellbauverein Basel*, the train a model locomotive onto which a camera has been mounted, and the view a projection of the footage captured by the train on a screen at the rear of the stage. Though Kaegi describes *Mnemopark* as 'ein Film, der vor den Augen des Publikums entsteht', the screen and the footage projected onto it are one element amongst many that form the production as a whole.<sup>43</sup> Throughout, the film footage is juxtaposed not only with the model itself, but also with facts, anecdotes and speculation that the model triggers from the five experts present on the stage. The footage itself is variously projected onto the screen from within the model, or has been taken from pre-recorded sources including documentaries, interviews and Bollywood. By viewing the projection, audience members are brought into the model and they experience a simulated space that

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<sup>43</sup> Rimini Protokoll, *Mnemopark – A Miniature Train World* <[http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/de/project\\_2484.html](http://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/de/project_2484.html)> [accessed 3 April 2016].

at first appears representative of their world. As will be demonstrated, by simulating Switzerland and Heimat in this way, *Mnemopark* exposes the tensions and anxieties that underpin any understanding of the concept. Indeed, the questioning of such notions forms a central feature of the production as a whole, though the notion of Heimat is never explicitly raised. In doing so, the production highlights how Heimat discourse is constructed in contemporary Switzerland as part of a wider historical tradition. In turn, this process exposes how the geographical, memorial and mythological foundations on which Heimat is based are negotiated in and through the media as part of a wider process of simulation that is mirrored in the construction of the model on the stage.

Baudrillard's theory of simulation centres on the representation of reality and how this impacts upon our conceptualization of reality itself. At its heart lies a concern with the shifting nature of the relationship between reality and the sign (image, object) from the Renaissance to the present day. The stages of this process, labelled in *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) as the 'Precession of Simulacra,' mark a progressive disconnect between sign and reality within the system of representation.<sup>44</sup> In Baudrillard's taxonomy, signs functioned as counterfeits and continued to bear resemblance to reality during the representational paradigm dominant between the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution. Technological advancement, however, precipitated a break-down in the relationship between the sign and reality. Indeed, the rise of the assembly line facilitated the simultaneous production of multiple, identical items. For Baudrillard this resulted in an inability to differentiate between original and copy, and so signs came to 'mask and denature a profound reality' (6). That is, whilst we assume that a sign bears an ongoing resemblance to reality, in fact such a relationship no longer exists: the sign's resemblance is, in fact, not to reality, but to other signs. In the contemporary era, even this masking has given way. Indeed, the breakdown in the relationship between sign and reality is so great that for Baudrillard our present is defined by the concept of simulation, 'the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal' (1). That is, our

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<sup>44</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. by Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994). Further references to Baudrillard will be included in the main body of the text.

current conceptualization of reality is dominated by a situation in which ‘the image [sign] has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum’ (6).

In the analysis of *Mnemopark* that follows I will demonstrate that the model Switzerland present on the stage functions as a simulation of reality. That is, the signs from which it is constructed bear no relation to the reality that they purport to represent. Indeed, such an extra-theatrical reality is revealed to be an impossibility and therefore devoid of any ontological superiority over its assumed representation. Far from negating reality outright, however, such simulation has the opposite effect in the production. Indeed, simulation affirms the ongoing possibility of reality. This is summarized by Rex Butler, who states that simulation is not about constructing the world as an illusion.<sup>45</sup> Rather, simulation is about working through this illusion and getting to the reality that underlies what Butler terms the ‘fundamental illusionality of the world’.<sup>46</sup>

The alpine landscape features as a key aspect of *Mnemopark* even before the performance begins (from 0.00.00). Seated within the auditorium, the audience is encompassed by a depiction of an alpine vista that is printed onto a sheet that surrounds them to the sides and rear, leaving their view of the stage, the model and the projection screen unhindered. This depiction of the mountains calls to mind the romanticized depiction of the Alps typical of tourist posters and official publications: high, snow-capped peaks are set against a clear, blue sky. Furthermore, this vista enters into the theatrical space: bright yellow *Wegweiser*, the ubiquitous way-markers of Switzerland’s hiking trails, have been placed in the auditorium, and traditional alpine music is played as audience members take their seats. The image of mountains surrounding the audience therefore roots them in the majestic world of natural beauty that has been mythologized within Swiss Heimat discourse since the latter half of the eighteenth century. As the house lights fade and the production begins, however, the unsteady foundations of such images become clear. Indeed, in the course of the production, the simulated nature of the model and the implications that this has for the constructed image of the alps as a marker

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<sup>45</sup> Rex Butler, *Jean Baudrillard: The Defence of the Real*, (London and Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage, 1999), p. 24.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

of collective identity expose the multiple ways in which individuals negotiate Heimat both historically and in response to an increasingly globalized world.

At the start of the production the four model-building experts reveal to the audience the practices that underpin the construction of their models, and the multiple forms this takes are echoed by the different types of model each expert prefers to construct: René Mühlethaler has recreated his family home for *Mnemopark*, but previously made an American landscape, named Mill Valley after his surname (0.04.00); Hermann Löhle explains how he collects the small twigs and other items to (re)construct his artificial landscapes (0.13.50); Heidi Louise Ludewig, however, prefers to (re)create fictionalized landscapes from literature and her imagination, proudly stating ‘ich bau mir meine eigene Welt’ to the amusement of the audience (0.04.27). In narrating the strategies they employ to construct their models, the experts illustrate how individuals variously construct Heimat. In doing so, each layers real and imagined images onto a focalizer, here the alpine landscape, in a process that contributes to the creation of a collective image onto which multiple conceptualizations of Heimat can be anchored. At the same time, psycho-spiritual connections between the experts and, real and imagined landscapes are exposed.

The exposure of such psycho-spiritual connections can be seen later in the production, when Ludewig explains a model cemetery that she constructed as a space to mourn her mother, who in reality is buried in an unmarked grave (from 1.11.10). Similar practices are referenced by Brenda D. Melendy in her discussion of the creation of Heimat in Germany by expellees after the Second World War.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, of the multiple institutions and practices by which these individuals sought to establish a new Heimat whilst maintaining a connection to the old, Melendy identifies the burial of the dead as a key connector between individual and geography.<sup>48</sup> By incorporating a cemetery into her model building in this way, Ludewig invests her creation with a psychological purpose that mirrors practices central to the formation of Heimat. However, that her mother is buried in an unmarked grave means that such connections cannot exist in reality as the site cannot be visited. As such, the mother’s grave in the model

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<sup>47</sup> Brenda D. Melendy, ‘Narratives, Festivals and Reinvention: Defining the German Postwar Homeland in Waldkraiberg’, *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 39:6 (2006), pp. 1049-1076.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1066.

represents a simulation that offers access to an impossibility. In doing so, the model is invested with a memorial potentiality as a simulated *milieu de mémoire*, the very Mnemopark of the title. In this manner, the stage of *Mnemopark* becomes a representation of an idealized Switzerland formed from individual connections and projections. Furthermore, the model-building and recourse to memorialization that characterize the production are shown to be key features in the conceptualization of geographical space as Heimat, played out here within the simulation at the level of the model.

In the opening discussion of Heimat above I note that the innocence and perceived stability associated with the term often results from nostalgia and a recourse to childhood. The underlying instability and anxiety of Heimat that results from temporal distance and change is touched upon in *Mnemopark* through the presence of the actress-cum-expert Rahel Hubacher's childhood home within the model (0.09.00 and again at 1.04.00). The miniature farmstead supposedly recreates the original, located in the village of Bannwil in the Bernese Highlands, and features farm workers and cows that are said sarcastically to be both colder and shinier than those in real life. Crucially, the farm as it exists in the model no longer represents the farm as it exists in reality. Hubacher states:

Seit den Fotos, nach denen du [Max Kurrus] unseren Hof nachgebaut hast, hat es mein Vater in der Realität schon wieder umgebaut. Meine Eltern leben mittlerweile von einem Nebenerwerb. Sie vermieten jetzt Bagger und Baumaschinen. Hier hat mein Vater eine Rampe gebaut, über dem Stall hängt mittlerweile ein großes Schild: Baggervermietung H. Hubacher. Und im Wohnzimmer steht ein Computer.<sup>49</sup>

Rimini Protokoll discuss this discrepancy in *ABCD*. According to the collective, the difference between the farm in reality and its miniature recreation on the stage is representative of the fact that a traditional Swiss farm can only ever exist in a model.<sup>50</sup> Whilst *Mnemopark* posits this as a result of the accelerated diversification taking place on Swiss farms, the notion of a 'traditional farmstead' always already exists as an idealization. Indeed, it represents the importance of the 'ländliche Idyll' that Hentschel identifies as a key component of the *Mythos Schweiz*.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 76.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.



There is something of a parallel here to Baudrillard's third order of simulacra (that is, the process of simulation that dominates in the present). According to Rex Butler, this order encapsulates a logic in which 'the system puts forward an other to itself so that it is proved all the more'.<sup>51</sup> Butler links this to Baudrillard's discussion of Disneyland in *Simulacra and Simulation*, in which the theme park functions to deny the reality of the third order of simulacra. As Baudrillard states: 'Disneyland exists in order to hide that it is the "real" country, all of "real" America, that is Disneyland' (12). That is, the theme park is predicated on concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, but is instead based on the recycling of lost commodities and practices. Baudrillard extends this situation to both the system of representation and life itself (13). For Baudrillard, this has '[the] effect of the imaginary concealing that reality no more exists outside than inside the limits of the artificial perimeter' (14). There is, in effect, no real, or at least no real as we have typically conceived of it. In the case of *Mnemopark* and the Hubacher farmstead, the farmstead functions as simulation: not only is there a representational disjoint between the model of the farmstead and the farmstead as it exists in reality, but the notion of the supposedly real farmstead is shown in *ABCD* to be a simulation that masks the non-existence of the real. As such, the model gestures out of itself into an extra-theatrical reality, but in doing so exposes the constructed nature of reality itself.

### **Film, 'Flashback' and Memory: Simulating Past and Present in Heimat**

Alongside the model itself and the experts' anecdotes, film plays a major role throughout *Mnemopark*. Kaegi utilizes film in multiple ways that extend beyond the projection of footage from inside the model onto the screen at the rear of the stage, to include the presentation of film footage on the same screen throughout the production. The latter includes not only footage of Rahel Hubacher's parental farmstead and clips from a documentary on the artificial insemination of cows (0.28.39), but also excerpts from Bollywood film and the experts' recreation of these. Furthermore, film is used in an interactive way to present to the audience the memories of the experts from within the model itself. In

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<sup>51</sup> Rex Butler, *Jean Baudrillard*, p. 44f.

three so-called ‘flashbacks’, the experts are projected into the model via green screen technology, revealing the memorial traces that are embedded into both the simulated Heimat on the stage and the supposedly real landscapes on which the model is based, to which I return below.

For Rimini Protokoll, utilizing film in these ways gives the production a ‘filmische Vogelperspektive’ that is said to pass into the realm of ‘theatrale Landschaftsmalerei’.<sup>52</sup> The revelation, juxtaposition, layering and blending of film throughout *Mnemopark* contribute to the simulation of Switzerland as Heimat, as filmic traces narrate the supposedly real alpine landscape on which the model is based. In this way, *Mnemopark* puts forward a perpetuation of the generation of Switzerland from disparate traces that can be dated back to the emergence of the *Mythos Schweiz* identified by Hentschel. One can identify in this process how the discrete elements of the model are blended together and layered with memory to give the impression of a coherent whole. Furthermore, the malleability of the model is emphasized: figurines and other items such as trees and rocks are moved from place to place throughout the production as the emphasis or the action shifts around the stage. In this way, the production simultaneously highlights the seemingly unified nature of Heimat as it is posited in discourse, whilst undermining this by emphasizing the formlessness that underpins the concept through its disconnect with reality. As such, it opens up understandings of Heimat that draw upon positive notions encoded in the concept that have emerged as a result of globalization, as explored by Shortt, Dewulf and Eigler.

At the same time, the presentation of Bollywood film in the production exposes the extent to which the mountains are simulated by emphasizing the demythologization of the Alps engendered by foreign audiences’ conceptualization of this mountain range in relation to others. We are told that, since the escalation of conflict in Kashmir, Bollywood producers have increasingly shot films in the Swiss Alps because of the resemblance they bear to the Himalayan foothills (0.45.00). As such, the Alps are presented in an alternative guise to Bollywood film audiences; sites in locales surrounding Gstaad, Grindelwald and the Jungfrauoch, for example, assume a status in the minds of the Bollywood audience that sites them thousands of kilometres away. Indeed, a new tourist industry has

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p. 75.

been generated in Switzerland as a direct result of films being shot there: groups of Indian tourists now come to the country to experience the landscapes which feature in their favourite films. Labelled in *Mnemopark* as both a 'Märchenlandschaft' and a 'Postkartenlandschaft,' these landscapes and the terms used to describe them serve to highlight the construction and imagination that underpin reality (0.45.50). This is, of course, not only part of a wider cinematic tradition in which one landscape 'stands in for' another, but it is also a process of which the audience is fully aware. Indeed, so prevalent are such practices that they can extend beyond 'reality' (such as Prague representing eighteenth-century Vienna in *Amadeus* (1984)) and into fantasy (as with the Tunisian desert serving as Tatooine in the *Star Wars* films). This entire practice is marked then by a doubling that is highlighted in *Mnemopark*. Kaegi demonstrates how the simulation of Himalayan geography in Bollywood film is removed from 'reality' since the signifier to which the image refers is grounded in another geographical space, the Alps. This not only deconstructs the relationship between signifier and signified in Bollywood film, but also divorces the Alps from their own referential reality by highlighting the ease by which they can be subsumed into alternative, non-Swiss systems of representation.

In foregrounding those international elements that underpin the construction of Switzerland as Heimat, Kaegi emphasizes a wider artistic concern that he shares with the other members of Rimini Protokoll, namely in the effects that globalization and international relations have on the individual. On the one hand, the presence of the Other in the Heimat contributes to the feeling of anxiety that precipitates the projection of Heimat itself, revealing a conflict at the heart of notions of Heimat. That is, if globalization affects and alters the landscape as well as the individual, then the individual's recourse to the geographical security engendered in Heimat discourse is also prone to the same fate. In this manner, *Mnemopark* emphasizes the fact that there is no escaping the globalizing forces which currently affect our world. On the other hand, however, a parallel can be drawn between the positing of the Alps in Bollywood film, and the historical mythologization of the Alps by German travellers as outlined by Hentschel. In both cases we find an appropriation of the landscapes that underpin Heimat by the Other. Rather than precipitating an anxiety in relation to Heimat, however, this serves to bolster the image that anchors Heimat and opens up the landscape to multiple interpretations beyond

Switzerland's borders. As such, the international forces that are often seen to threaten Heimat are shown in *Mnemopark* to play a constitutive role in precipitating a pluralistic understanding of Heimat that maintains parallel conceptualizations of Switzerland that can be traced back through the period of *geistige Landesverteidigung* and beyond.

Kaegi exposes the romanticized and mythologized foundations of Heimat further in *Mnemopark* by having the experts film their own versions of scenes from Bollywood films in the 'original' Indian locations in the Swiss Alps (0.46.50 and 1.26.00). This footage is juxtaposed with that from the original films, but whereas the Indian productions present an idyllic and romanticized alpine Kashmir to their audiences, the clips made for *Mnemopark* reveal the harsh realities of living in the Alps. A Bollywood dance scene transitions, for example, to the experts performing choreographed dances on golf buggies, emphasizing that it is increasingly lucrative for Swiss farmers to convert their land to purposes other than agriculture, in spite of heavy government subsidies. What is more, this film footage also gestures towards the three 'flashbacks' that take place during the production, for which technology is used to transport the experts through space and time to the Heimat that exists in their memory. To achieve this, Kaegi employs green-screen technology and the camera that is mounted onto the model locomotive to incorporate the experts' bodies into footage shot within the model. The experts stand in front of a green screen placed stage right and the actions that they perform are layered onto footage that is being shot simultaneously from inside the model. This is projected onto the screen at the rear of the stage with the effect that the experts appear to be within the model itself. Whilst the real body of the expert enters here into the simulated landscape of the model, their mediatization via the footage projected at stage rear serves to subsume them into the process of representation itself: their body is present in a duplicated, simulated form.

Ludewig is the first of the experts to experience a 'flashback', journeying back to her lost Heimat, she arrives in Leipzig's railway station in 1956 (from 0.33.00). Speaking in the present tense, Ludewig tells the audience that she is faced with a choice between staying in the East and fleeing to the West, a dilemma supposedly based on her experiences as a young engineer. She explains: 'Ich hau ab. Ich geh in den Westen.' Seeing no future in the East, she leaves, eventually settling in southern

Baden-Württemberg. Through this 'flashback,' Ludewig is able to experience a lost memorial reality that, since the reunification of Germany in 1990, can no longer be reclaimed. Though Ludewig does not overly romanticize her life in the GDR when explaining it to the audience, her narrative is emblematic of the temporal rupture that underpins conceptualizations of Heimat. As outlined above, such rupture always already serves to stand between the representation of Heimat and its basis in an ostensible reality. In his own 'flashback,' René Mühlethaler relates to the audience his experiences as a pilot whilst doing national service in Switzerland, before 'visiting' the model of his family home. His model home is replete with miniature versions of himself and other family members, which again underlines the notions of temporal distance and familial comfort that contribute to Heimat (from 0.37.00).

In the third 'flashback', however, during which Max Kurrus 'flies' above the model whilst recalling 1940s Switzerland to the audience (from 1.20.55), a shift in temporality takes place that moves his narrative from the past into the future, transforming the 'flashback' into a 'flashforward'. However, he is 'attacked' by a bird, falls from the sky, and lands 'in die Zukunft,' which is represented on the stage by a completely white module that has yet to be transformed into a further component of the model (1.23.19). Rahel Hubacher, taking the lead in the mission to 'save' Kurrus, states: 'Wir müssen uns was ausdenken, was [sic] Zukunft sein könnten,' (1.23.49). In this manner, we experience an opening-up of Heimat conceptualizations into the future that highlights further the formlessness underpinning the concept. This serves to remove conceptualizations of *Heimat* from the physical spaces to which they have been tied traditionally, and places the concept firmly in the mind of the conceiver, transmuting *Heimat* from pseudo-physical reality to a fully psychological potentiality. In this manner, the unformed Heimat-module parallels Linda Shortt's discussion of the impossibility of Heimat that emerges due to a temporal dissonance between the individual and Heimat. For Shortt, Heimat is always already 'a remembered past or a future becoming, [...] rarely a present achievement.'<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Linda Shortt, *German Narratives of Belonging*, p. 15.

## Conclusion

Throughout *Mnemopark*, Kaegi examines the construction and negotiation of Switzerland as Heimat in the contemporary. As I have demonstrated, this process is firmly embedded in historical representations and negotiations of Switzerland, not least the *Mythos Schweiz* examined by Hentschel and the conceptualization of the state as a *Willensnation* within the period of *geistige Landesverteidigung*. What links all of these negotiations strongly, however, is the disconnect they engender between reality and its representation. Indeed, the unformed module discussed above fully divorces the model from any basis in reality on a temporal level: both the signifier (the model-image) and the signified (reality) have yet to come into existence, which serves in turn to open out the simulation into a future becoming. It cannot be forgotten, however, that the Heimat that is constructed, deconstructed and radically reconstructed throughout this production is a simulation. This image of an extra-theatrical reality is simultaneously posited as representative of reality whilst, embedded as it is in the precession of simulacra, masking the absence of that very reality itself. As stated above, however, Baudrillard's notion of simulation, of the hyperreality of the present, does not negate the existence of reality outright, but instead gestures towards reality's ongoing possibility. It is at this point that *Mnemopark's* pluralistic image of Switzerland comes to the fore: in the simulation, Switzerland is not negated, but is shown to be constructed as Heimat in and through psychological and memorial processes that are represented in the system of signs that underpins Heimat discourse as a whole.